

Scientia Canadensis

Canadian Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Revue canadienne d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine

Scientia
Canadensis

The Mapmakers' Legacy: Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia Through Maps. By Joan Dawson. (Halifax: Nimbus, 2007. vii + 152 p., maps, ill., bibl., index. ISBN 978-1-55109-607-0 \$29.95)

Jeffrey S. Murray

Volume 32, numéro 1, 2009

Medical Sciences and Medical Buildings

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/037630ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/037630ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

CSTHA/AHSTC

ISSN

0829-2507 (imprimé)

1918-7750 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Murray, J. S. (2009). Compte rendu de [*The Mapmakers' Legacy: Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia Through Maps.* By Joan Dawson. (Halifax: Nimbus, 2007. vii + 152 p., maps, ill., bibl., index. ISBN 978-1-55109-607-0 \$29.95)]. *Scientia Canadensis*, 32(1), 69–70. <https://doi.org/10.7202/037630ar>

Copyright © Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association /
Association pour l'histoire de la science et de la technologie au Canada, 2009

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

é
rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Science / Science

***The Mapmakers' Legacy: Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia Through Maps.* By Joan Dawson.** (Halifax: Nimbus, 2007. vii + 152 p., maps, ill., bibl., index. ISBN 978-1-55109-607-0 \$29.95)

A former teacher, librarian, local historian, and Fellow of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society, Joan Dawson has had a long-time love affair with the early cartography of her province. A previous title by her, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, co-published 20 years ago by Nimbus Publishing and the Nova Scotia Museum, looked at the earliest maps of Nova Scotia, from the arrival of the first European explorers to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this latest book, *The Mapmakers' Legacy*, Dawson extends her examination of Nova Scotia's cartographic legacy into the nineteenth century. This was a period of impressive growth for the province. It saw the first serious attempts by Euro-Canadians to gain a better understanding of the region and its resources (especially those inland from the coast), and to record and communicate this understanding through the cartographic record.

Dawson's format is similar to her earlier study. Her first two chapters set the mapping context for Nova Scotia by providing readers with biographical information on a few of the major mapmakers and publishers. The cartographic contributions of these mapmakers, plus many others, are then presented in seven thematic chapters: road mapping; resource surveys; canals and railway mapping; military mapping; hydrographic surveys; settlement surveys; and urban mapping. The discussion primarily focuses on mainland Nova Scotia; there is little consideration given to Cape Breton (other than Louisburg) or Sable Island. A curious oversight in the case of the latter, given that she has a chapter on hydrographic surveys and the island's waters were charted regularly in an effort to improve their safety for commercial shipping.

Dawson's approach throughout is descriptive rather than analytical. She will often describe an individual map in considerable detail—the lakes and rivers, the road network, the placement of buildings, etc.—but will skim through the wider social, economic and historical contexts in which the map was created and distributed. Despite the fact that the nineteenth century saw some profound advances in the technology of mapmaking, the general reader will find little reference to these or to how they may have influenced the cartography of this maritime province.

The seven thematic chapters are followed by a brief conclusion, a well-crafted carto-bibliography of the 86 maps used in the book, a list of references, and an excellent index. The carto-bibliography thankfully mentions the holding institution and reference numbers. Unfortunately, Dawson provides no bibliographic information on any of the 25 non-cartographic illustrations (the photographs and documentary art) that she has dispersed throughout the text, but she does credit the institutions from which they were obtained.

The majority of the illustrations are in colour and were printed with far better definition than her title from 20 years ago, a testament no doubt to the improvements that archival institutions have made in reproducing their originals and to advances in printing generally. Only a few of the maps appear to have been reproduced from poor quality black and white photographs (for example, see figures 2.4 and 9.2). The majority of her illustrations originate with Nova Scotia institutions, specifically the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. Given that this title is meant to be a “picture” book, one wonders if the overall quality of the work might have been improved slightly if better examples of some of the less attractive illustrations were obtained from archival repositories outside of Halifax. These criticisms aside, Dawson’s book is well worth the price. It is an ambitious work that will surely leave a lasting and long-overdue tribute to Nova Scotia’s cartographic past.

JEFFREY S. MURRAY

Library and Archives Canada

William Logan’s 1845 Survey of the Upper Ottawa Valley. Edited and introduced by Charles H. Smith and Ian Dyck. (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2007. xvii + 238 p., ill., maps, notes, bibl., index. ISBN 978-0-6601-9662-6 \$29.95)

This volume is a very welcome contribution to the history of early Canadian field science. It is also likely to be of interest to historians of geology, environmental historians, and historical geographers more generally.

Canadian-born and British-trained, Sir William Edmond Logan (1798-1875) was the founding director of the Geological Survey of Canada, and remains to this day one of the best-known scientists of early Victorian Canada. Having explored Québec’s rugged Gaspé peninsula in 1843 and 1844 to begin his survey, Logan turned his attention in 1845 to the Ottawa River, a convenient route into the northern reaches of the colonial province of Canada. Unlike the well-stratified sedimentary rocks of the south, which were the principal objects of geological mapping in this era, here Logan